

UNITY, HEALTH TAKE CENTRE STAGE AT BIRTHDAY PRAYERS

By Lawrence Mulondo

Royalty, faith and an atmosphere of profound celebration filled St Nicholas Cathedral, Namungoona, in Kampala yesterday as thousands of believers from across religious denominations gathered for special prayers to mark Kabaka Ronald Muwenda Mutebi II's 71st birthday.

The annual thanksgiving prayers, held every April 13, drew an impressive congregation united in gratitude, hope and admiration for their king.

The prayers, which began at 11:00am, were graced by the Nnaabagereka, Sylvia Nagginda, who attended as the guest of honour. Also present were the Katikkiro of Buganda, Charles Peter Mayiga; Prince David Wasajja; John Chrysostom Muyingo, the higher education state minister and several legislators.

Religious leaders, including Church of Uganda Archbishop Stephen Mugalu Kaziimba, Kampala Catholic Church Archbishop Paul

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In his address, Katikkiro Charles Mayiga highlighted three pillars guiding this year's birthday reflections: leadership, health and unity.

He described the leadership as the backbone of Buganda's enduring strength, tracing its roots back to the time of Ssekabaka Kintu. He explained that the kingdom's structure, comprising the royals, chiefs and clans, remains central to maintaining cohesion and progress.

Ssemogerere, Bishop Anthony Zziwa of Kiyinda-Mityana Diocese and Supreme Mufti Sheikh Muhammad Shaban Galabuzi were in attendance.

Metropolitan Jeronymos Muzeeyi, the Archbishop of the Holy Metropolis of Kampala and All Uganda, led the service. He was assisted by Bishop

On health, Mayiga emphasised the importance of collective responsibility, particularly in the fight against HIV and AIDS.

He called upon men to take a leading role in protecting families and communities to eliminate new infections by 2030.

Mayiga reassured the congregation of the Kabaka's wellbeing, saying the king remains strong and continues to lead under careful medical guidance at 71.

Sylvester Kisitu of Jinja Diocese and All Eastern Uganda, as well as Bishop Nectarios Kabuye of Gulu Diocese and All Northern Uganda.

Muzeeyi expressed gratitude for the Orthodox Church being entrusted with hosting the celebrations, describing it as a great honour.



L-R: The Nnaabagereka, Sylvia Nagginda, cutting cake to mark Kabaka Muwenda Mutebi II's 71st birthday. She was flanked by Muzeeyi, Mayiga and Princess Gertrude Christine Nabanakulya. This was at St Nicholas Cathedral Namungoona in Kampala yesterday. (Scan picture using the Vision Digital Experience to watch video)

Delivering the sermon, Bishop Kisitu commended the Kabaka's commitment to fighting HIV and AIDS, noting that this aligns with the church's mission to safeguard life. He urged both the young and old to take responsibility in protecting vulnerable groups, especially women and girls.

On behalf of the central government, Muyingo conveyed birthday wishes from President Yoweri Museveni. He said the relationship between the Government and the kingdom

continues to grow stronger, contributing to national development.

In a joyful climax, a four-tier cake was cut by the Nnaabagereka, joined by royals and dignitaries.

Kabaka Mutebi II is the 36th king of Buganda kingdom. He was born on April 13, 1955, at Mulago Hospital. He is the son of Sir Edward Frederick Muteesa II, who reigned as Kabaka of Buganda from 1959 to 1969. His mother was Omuzana Kabejja Sarah Nalule of the Nkima clan.